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House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day and for a safe return to Washington.

Bless the Members of this assembly as they set upon the important work that faces them. Help them to make wise decisions in a good manner and to carry their responsibilities steadily with high hopes for a better future for our great Nation.

May they be empowered by what they have heard during their home district visits to work together. May they realize that each of them represents voters who side with their opponents and that there are millions of Americans who voted for their opponents as well. The work to be done must benefit all Americans. Give them courage to make difficult choices when they are faced with them.

May Your blessing, O God, be with them and with us all this day and every day to come, and may all we do be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. POE of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP OF VETERANS

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, recently I met with the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Houston, Texas, who shared some disturbing news:

The First Amendment rights of veterans have come under attack by the Federal Government. The director of the Houston Veterans Administration Cemetery has led an authoritarian quest to remove Christianity and religion from funerals. She has banned the words "God" and "Jesus Christ" in the burial ceremonies of deceased veterans. She censors the prayers. She shut down the chapel, took out the cross, took out the Bible, and locked the doors.

Government censorship of funeral services for those who have fought and died for our country is unacceptable, unconstitutional, and un-American. The policy of the director is anti-Christian, antireligion, and antiveteran.

Today I filed the Veterans Religious Freedom Act. This bill will protect the constitutional right to freedom of religion and prohibit the Veterans Administration from censoring free speech and censoring religion. It will require the veteran cemetery directors to be veterans.

The First Amendment is sacred. Funerals are sacred. And when our veterans are buried, that soil becomes sacred. It is the constitutional duty of the Federal Government to protect speech and religion, not censor it.

And that's just the way it is.

CONGRESS' PERFORMANCE

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by what I heard while I was home in August. People are disappointed with us, their elected representatives, and they want us to do our constitutional duty of solving the Nation's problems and to start working together.

They want to get America moving again. They want the problems of the economy addressed. They want jobs, they want opportunity, and they want a government that works for the good of the country.

Is there anyone amongst us here that is proud that we could not produce a budget? that we caused the downgrading of the U.S. Government securities? that we caused appalling disorder and confusion in the market, stifling economic growth and job creation and contributing to the hopelessness and the misfortune of millions of Americans?

Failed leadership and failed followership—we owe the country better. We must do better.

I hope that those of you here who feel ashamed of our performance, as I do, will join together. It is our duty to solve the Nation's problems and to stop this nonsense. If we do not, the people in their righteous and justified outrage will get rid of us all. And well they should.

SELECT COMMITTEE NEEDS TO PUT PATIENT PROTECTION AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ON THE TABLE

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, every household in America knows this: The easiest money to save is money you haven't yet spent. That seems like common sense.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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